

foundation, pour a new foundation, and relower the house on top of it—would at least be able to get a deduction under an IRS deduction provision that goes back decades, the property casualty loss provision, which was good news.

Unfortunately, in the tax bill which was signed into law by President Trump in December, one of its most boneheaded provisions actually narrowed the scope of the property casualty loss to only those property cases which happened in an area that has been declared a federally declared disaster, which, again, because this, so far, FEMA has ruled is as a result of a manmade product, concrete, does not qualify for that FEMA designation.

Thankfully, we have some outstanding people at the IRS, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury David Kautter, who, again, looked at the tax bill that was signed into law and basically issued the ruling on Tuesday that allows, at least for the next 3 years, homeowners to claim this deduction, again, using an amended return for 2017, as a way of getting the full benefit before the tax bill steps in in 2020 and eliminates this avenue of relief.

This was a provision which never belonged in the tax bill. It affects a much broader cross section of Americans, not just folks from homes with crumbling foundations who are not in declared disaster areas.

I know that members on the House Ways and Means Committee, particularly Congressman RICHIE NEAL, are very focused in terms of trying to fix this really harmful provision that provides almost zero tax savings to the Federal budget but causes huge harm to homeowners like the ones in Connecticut and western Massachusetts.

Again, Congressman NEAL, Congressman LARSON, and I have been working with the IRS over the last 19 months to get this safe harbor for homeowners to be able to get the benefit of this provision.

I want to thank the folks at IRS and Treasury for their ruling on Tuesday that at least allowed another 3-year window for people who are totally innocent victims who, because of the way insurance policies are structured, cannot, in most instances, get property casualty loss coverage for this type of loss to at least be able to soften the blow with this deduction.

Mr. Speaker, included in the bipartisan budget agreement which passed at 5 o'clock in the morning last Friday was a provision that did not receive a great deal of attention but actually will provide a great deal of relief, particularly for America's seniors. In particular, it reduced and narrowed the size of the doughnut hole for seniors who use the Medicare part D prescription drug program.

As many may recall, in 2003, when the Medicare prescription drug benefit was first created, it had a doughnut hole that basically said that seniors who signed up for Medicare part D

after \$2,000 of benefits for prescription drugs covered under the law would then have to pay a full 100 percent deductible until their prescription drug costs reached \$5,000. It was like buying a car, making a monthly payment, and then after 2,000 miles having to get out and walk for the next 3,000 miles until you again hit the trigger for the doughnut hole to kick back in for coverage.

When we passed the Affordable Care Act in 2010, we started the process of narrowing that doughnut hole, again, by 50 percent in year 1. It was again up to 35 percent in 2017, and the bill that passed on Friday night will actually do the final step to eliminate the doughnut hole entirely in 2019.

The really impressive part of that provision is that narrowing is not going to be paid for by the taxpayer. The pharmaceutical companies are the ones who will have to bear the brunt of narrowing that cost so that seniors will again have huge savings in the scope of thousands of dollars because of that provision.

Again, this is an example of where the bipartisan work that was done on that budget bill actually resulted in a very concrete, tangible benefit for America's seniors. I think that will be welcome news for those who are bearing the high cost of prescription drugs.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As we meditate on all the blessings of life, we especially pray for the blessing of peace in our lives and in our world. May Your special blessings be upon the Members of this assembly as they return from a long weekend in their home districts. Give them wisdom and charity, that they might work together for the common good.

May all that is done this day in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SCHNEIDER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF RON PARISH

(Mr. HULTGREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday morning, Ron Parish of Yorkville, Illinois, passed from the loving arms of his wife, Becky, into the open arms of Jesus.

Ron was a lifelong salesman whose career included RC Cola, Nabisco, McCormick spice company, and more. After he retired, he faithfully served our community's homeless at Kendall County PADS.

Ron's people skills served him well in business and in his relationships. He was always reaching out to friends and strangers alike. He would ask how they are doing, how he could help, and he was always pointing them to Jesus.

In fact, Ron and Becky introduced my family to their church, Harvest New Beginnings, and they were the very first to greet us on that God-ordained day 3 years ago when we first visited Harvest New Beginnings. It has become our home church.

Ron was 75 years old and is survived by Becky; two children, Ron, Jr., and Rhonda; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

I know you are smiling down on us now, Ron. Well done, good and faithful servant.

#### IMPROVE MONITORING OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

(Mr. SCHNEIDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, today, the heads of our intelligence agencies are testifying in the Senate with a unanimous and stark warning: Russia's meddling in 2016 was not an isolated incident, our midterm elections remain vulnerable, and Putin is targeting the 2018 elections.

"The United States is under attack," said Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats.

Russia's actions demand a serious response, both to hold our attackers accountable and to deter future interference. Remarkably, President Trump

and his administration have proved unwilling to act. We must do better.

I am proud to join with my friend and colleague, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, to introduce the DETER Act in the House. This bicameral, bipartisan legislation, introduced in the Senate by CHRIS VAN HOLLEN and MARCO RUBIO, will improve our monitoring of foreign interference and impose immediate and severe sanctions when such actions are identified. It is an important step to ensure the integrity of every American's vote.

Protecting our elections is a national concern superseding party and politics. As we approach the next national election in less than 9 months, we must work together and we must act now.

I urge my colleagues to support the DETER Act to secure our elections this year and beyond.

#### AMERICANS VIEW MEDIA NEGATIVELY

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Gallup recently polled Americans on their perceptions of the news media. The poll revealed that 43 percent of Americans have a negative view of the media, 10 percent more than who have a positive view. Two-thirds said that the news media does not do a good job of separating fact from fiction. More than half said they couldn't think of one objective news source.

These are remarkable findings and yet unsurprising. The liberal news media has abandoned objective, fact-based reporting and is, instead, pushing a liberal agenda. Their partisan-driven news only tells one side of the story: their side. The liberal media has made it their mission to attack the President and Republicans on a daily basis at the expense of the facts.

Americans know it when they see it. This is a liberal, partisan agenda masquerading as journalism. Until the news returns to objective reporting, Americans will continue to view them negatively.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the following enrolled bills were signed by the Speaker on Friday, February 9, 2018:

H.R. 582, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require multi-line telephone systems to have a configuration that permits users to directly initiate a call to 9-1-1 without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or postfix, and for other purposes;

H.R. 1301, making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes;

H.R. 1892, to amend title 4, United States Code, to provide for the flying of

the flag at half-staff in the event of the death of a first responder in the line of duty;

S. 1438, to redesignate the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in the State of Missouri as the "Gateway Arch National Park".

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, February 9, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,  
*The Speaker, The Capitol,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on February 9, 2018 at 10:19 a.m., said to contain a message from the President whereby he submits a notice continuing the national emergency with respect to Libya.

With best wishes, I am,  
Sincerely,

ROBERT F. REEVES,  
*Deputy Clerk of the House.*

#### CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO LIBYA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-93)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13566 of February 25, 2011, with respect to Libya is to continue in effect beyond February 25, 2018.

Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, his government, and close associates took extreme measures against the people of Libya, including using weapons of war, mercenaries, and wanton violence against unarmed civilians. There remains a serious risk that former members of the Qadhafi government, members of the Qadhafi family, the Qadhafi family's close associates, or others determined to undermine the United Nations peace process might misappropriate Libyan state assets. The diver-

sion of these resources could prolong and deepen the current instability in Libya, which would benefit the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and other terrorist groups and pose a serious risk to the national security of the United States and the security of regional partners.

A strong and united Libya is the best defense against terrorism in the region. The violence among Libyans that began in Benghazi in May 2014, and spread thereafter to Tripoli and throughout the country, has destabilized the country. Until Libyans resolve their underlying political divisions, there will remain a significant threat of civil conflict in Libya. Many of the ongoing political divisions are over power and access to Libya's resources, and further destabilization is possible were sanctions to be lifted. We continue to encourage Libyans to engage in political dialogue and refrain from violence. Those who reject dialogue and obstruct or undermine Libya's democratic transition must be held accountable. While we work with the international community to identify those individuals who pose a threat to Libya's democratic transition, we must also continue to ensure that appropriate sanctions remain in place.

The situation in Libya continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, and measures are needed to protect against the diversion of assets or other abuses by members of Qadhafi's family, their associates, and others hindering Libyan national reconciliation. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Libya.

DONALD J. TRUMP.  
*THE WHITE HOUSE, February 9, 2018.*

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, February 9, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,  
*The Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on February 9, 2018 at 10:20 a.m., said to contain a message from the President whereby he submits designations under the Balanced and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

With best wishes, I am  
Sincerely,

ROBERT F. REEVES,  
*Deputy Clerk of the House.*